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**SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION****RECEIVED**

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AZ CORP COMMISSION
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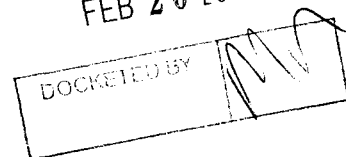
February 18, 2009

Docket Control Office
Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2996Subject: Communications Plan for Arizona Low-Income Bill Assistance Program
Docket No. G-01551A-08-0556

Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest) herewith submits for filing an original and thirteen (13) copies of its Communications Plan for its Arizona Low-Income Bill Assistance program, in compliance with Decision No. 70660, dated December 22, 2008, in the above-referenced docket.

Respectfully submitted,

SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

By: Debra S. Gallo
Debra S. Galloc: Mr. Ernest Johnson, ACC
Ms. Jodi Jerich, RUCO
Compliance Section, ACCArizona Corporation Commission
DOCKETED
FEB 20 2009



SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

**Communications Plan
for
Arizona Bill Assistance**

February 2009

I. Research

A. Background

On December 22, 2008, the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) in Decision No. 70660 (Docket No. 01551A-08-0556) ordered Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest) to enhance its outreach of bill assistance to focus directly on late-paying customers, and that information on bill assistance be made available to late-paying customers before they are disconnected or reach a level of delinquency requiring a security deposit or an increase in a deposit. The ACC expressed concern that customers who are required to pay both deposits and monthly bills out of their bill assistance funding are likely to use more assistance funding overall since part of the money is tied up in deposits. Consequently, the ACC directed Southwest to develop a Communications Plan outlining how it will provide earlier and more targeted communication/information on bill assistance to customers who are having problems paying their natural gas bills or before they are disconnected.

B. Audiences – Low-income customers

1. LIRA (Low Income Ratepayer Assistance) Customers
2. Late-Paying Customers
3. Disconnect Customers

II. Action Plan

A. Our goal is to:

Communicate to residential customers who are having trouble paying their natural gas bills and encourage them to call Southwest or a Community Action Agency regarding bill assistance and/or to make pay arrangements before they are disconnected or arrears become extensive.

B. Key messages will encourage customers to:

1. Call Southwest to make payment arrangements or inquire about information regarding bill payment options.
2. Call a local Community Action Agency for bill assistance.
3. Apply for low-income bill assistance programs, if applicable.
4. Sign up for LIRA, if applicable.
5. Use energy saving tips to help lower utility bills.

C. Methods for communicating our key messages:

1. Annual LIRA Letter
2. Disconnect/Deposit Assistance Letter
3. Annual Assistance Letter
4. Web site
5. Public Service Announcement/Radio
6. Community Outreach

III. Implementation

Communications to Arizona residential customers will commence in the first quarter 2009, by using the Annual LIRA Letter and Disconnect Letter which includes a LIRA application.

A. Annual LIRA Letter – Southwest will distribute an annual letter to our current LIRA customers informing them to call Southwest if they need to make payment arrangements before they are disconnected or progress into long-term delinquency, and provide them with community resources, as well as energy conservation tips. – Implement 1st Quarter 2009 (Example 1)

- B. Disconnect/Deposit Assistance Letter** – Southwest will automatically distribute a letter to those customers who do not have an adequate deposit and who have received two disconnect notices within a 12-month period. The letter will include bill assistance resources and energy conservation tips, as well as the LIRA application. – 1st – 4th Quarters (Example 2)
- C. Annual Assistance Letter** – Southwest will distribute a letter to customers who have three late payments within a 12-month period to provide them with bill assistance information and energy conservation resources, as well as the LIRA application. This letter will be distributed before the winter heating season – 3rd Quarter (Example 3)
- D. Web site** – Southwest will update its Web site with a “Need Help Paying Your Bill?” link on the homepage, as well as updating the community resources page to include the ArizonaSelfHelp.org Web site link, which is a free, one-stop-shop and easy way for Arizona residents to obtain a list of 25 different health and human services programs. ArizonaSelfHelp.org is a project by Arizona Community Action Association and is not affiliated with any state agency. – Implement 2nd Quarter 2009 (Example 4)
- E. Public Service Announcements/Radio** – Southwest developed radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for the Arizona Community Action Association (ACAA). The PSAs are generic messages for utility customers to call if they are having trouble paying their bill and encourage them to take advantage of utility and community resources before they are disconnected. The radio spots will run in both English and Spanish. Southwest plans to assist ACAA with distributing the PSAs to radio stations throughout Arizona. – 2nd – 4th Quarter 2009 (Example 5)

F. Community Outreach – Southwest will assist with community outreach events such as the CARE Fair in Tucson, Community Action Day in Casa Grande, or general community outreach events when requested or where applicable. Southwest will provide community agencies with energy education materials and LIRA applications for the various community events as needed.

IV. Results

During implementation, this plan will be monitored and adjusted by Southwest based on response rate, increase of LIRA applications, the percentage of bill assistance funding going towards deposits, and communications with the ACC Staff.

EXAMPLE 1 – Annual LIRA Letter

Dear LIRA Customer:

At Southwest Gas, we understand that our customers occasionally experience financial hardships. As such, we make every effort to work with our customers on deferred payment plans that meet customer needs, and help us avoid service disconnections.

If you are currently experiencing a problem paying your bill, or anticipate that a problem may soon occur, please call us at 1-877-860-6020 to discuss your payment options. We can also provide contact information for your local community action agency.

To access your Southwest Gas account information, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, call the number above to utilize the automated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) option. Available options include:

- **Account Status** - Account balance, amount due, due date, and last payment received
- **Payment Extensions** - Eligible customers will receive a three-day extension
- **Payment Locations** - Pay Station locations by zip code and corporate mailing address
- **Information to Pay by Debit/Credit Card or Electronic Check**
- **Optional Payment Plans** - Automatic Payment Plan and Equal Payment Plan, and E - Bill.
- **Financial Assistance and Low Income Programs**

You can receive additional information regarding bill assistance by visiting www.ArizonaSelfHelp.org. The Southwest Gas website, www.swgas.com, also provides energy-saving tips that may help you save money each month. Below are some helpful tips:

- During the winter, and health permitting, set the thermostat between 66-68 degrees while at home. It is estimated that for each degree the thermostat is lowered, two percent can be saved on your heating bill.
- Replace air filters on a monthly basis to help improve airflow
- Open shades, blinds and draperies in rooms that receive direct sunlight to take advantage of the sun's warmth, and be sure to close them before the sun sets.
- Utilize inexpensive energy-efficient improvements such as caulking and weather-stripping around doors and windows to insulate against drafts.
- Run full loads when washing dishes or clothes to save detergent, time, and energy. Drying clothes one after the other and keeping the lint filter clean, speeds drying time and saves energy.
- Save water and money by insulating pipes and repairing leaky water faucets.

Again, please call us as soon as possible if you experience problems paying your bill. The sooner we can work together, the better the solution.

EXAMPLE 2 – Disconnect/Deposit Assistance Letter

Dear (customer name):

Southwest Gas would like to remind you that when you pay your natural gas bills by the “due date,” you avoid late-pay charges as well as the need to pay a security or additional deposit on your account.

Because we appreciate your business and consider you a valued customer, we want to provide you with some information that can help address any future bill payment issues.

To access information regarding bill assistance, go to www.ArizonaSelfHelp.org. If you have any questions or would like information on convenient payment options, bill assistance or energy-saving tips, please visit our website at www.swgas.com, or call one of our helpful Customer Assistance representatives at 1-877-860-6020.

Due to heavy call volume on Mondays and Fridays, we recommend that you call Tuesday through Thursday, if possible, for quicker service.

Sincerely,

Customer Assistance Department

EXAMPLE 3 – Annual Assistance Letter

Dear (customer name):

Southwest Gas would like to remind you that when you pay your natural gas bills by the “due date,” you avoid any late-pay charges.

Because we appreciate your business and consider you a valued customer, we want to provide you with some information that can help address any future bill payment issues.

To access information regarding bill assistance, go to www.ArizonaSelfHelp.org. If you have any questions or would like information on convenient payment options, bill assistance or energy-saving tips, please visit our website at www.swgas.com, or call 1-877-860-6020 to speak with one of our helpful Customer Assistance representatives.

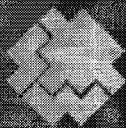
Due to heavy call volume on Mondays and Fridays, we recommend that you call Tuesday through Thursday, if possible, for quicker service.

Sincerely,

Customer Assistance Department

EXAMPLE 4 - Southwest Gas Web site

Homepage





SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

[CONTACT US](#) [SEARCH](#) [SWX QUOTE](#) [SPECIAL OFFERS](#)

Reading Meters Electronically
▶ Read more about this innovation


Start, Stop, or Transfer Service
Authorized Pay Station Locations
Emergency and Safety
Snow Load Information
Energy Efficiency Programs
Appliance Dealers or Contractors
Rates and Regulations
Employment Opportunities
Supplier Diversity
News Releases

NEWS BULLETIN
Residential Services
Billing and Payment Options
Electronic Billing
Automated Account System
How To...
News To Use
Energy Saving Tips
Special Programs
 **Need Help Paying Your Bill?**
Q2 2008 Southwest Gas Earnings Conference Call
Annual Report 2007
Proxy Materials



SOUTHWEST GAS

WARMING HEARTS & HOMES

**Outdoor Living Experience** [Flash](#) | [HTML](#)


Commercial Services
Commercial & Industrial Services
E-Bill for Business
Commercial Contacts
Industrial Contacts
Natural Gas Air Conditioning

Investor Relations
Company Profile
Financial Highlights
Corporate Governance
Committee Charters
Corporate Governance Guidelines
Code of Business Conduct & Ethics

About Southwest Gas / Residential / Commercial / Employment / News / Investor Relations / Energy Saving Tips
Rates and Regulation / Pay Your Bill / Supplier Diversity / Energy Efficient Homes / Gas Appliance Information / Emergency and Safety
Natural Gas Vehicles / Appliance Dealers or Contractors / Search / Site Map / Contact Us / PRIVACY


EXAMPLE 4 - Southwest Gas Web site

Arizona Assistance Programs Page

**SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION**
CONTACT US SEARCH SWX QUOTE SPECIAL OFFERS

Assistance Programs

Arizona Assistance Programs




Arizona Assistance Programs

Low-Income Energy Conservation Bill Assistance Program - This program is a short-term aid for low-income Southwest Gas customers who are facing a hardship or find themselves in a crisis. **Read more...**

Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance (LIRA) - Get a discount on your gas bill! **Read more...**

Deferred Payment Program - If you can demonstrate a hardship and have outstanding bills, our deferred payment plan allows you to pay your bill over an extended period of time. **Read more...**

**Energy Share Program** - This program is an emergency fund which provides direct assistance to qualified people with unexpected financial difficulties, such as the loss of a job or a medical emergency. Your tax deductible Energy Share donations are completely managed and distributed by The Salvation Army. One hundred percent of all donations are used to help families and individuals in need. To learn more, **Read more...**
To contribute to Energy Share, **click here.**

Arizona Self Help - For additional health and human service programs that are available, please visit **www.arizonaselfhelp.org**. This is an Arizona Community Action Association sponsored project and is not affiliated with any state agency.

Home / About Southwest Gas / Residential / Commercial / Employment / News / Investor Relations / Energy Saving Tips
Rates and Regulation / Pay Your Bill / Supplier Diversity / Energy Efficient Homes / Gas Appliance Information / Emergency and Safety
Natural Gas Vehicles / Appliance Dealers or Contractors / Search / Site Map / Contact Us / PRIVACY

EXAMPLE 5 – Public Service Announcements

ARIZONA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY Public Service Announcements (PSAs) Radio Spots

:30 second PSAs

#1

Your local utility wants you to know that if you're having trouble paying your gas or electric bill, give them a call before you receive that disconnect or late notice.

They understand that these are difficult financial times and are here to help.

You can also log onto www.arizonaselfhelp.org for more information about energy bill assistance.

Make the call today. You're not alone.

#2

Have the stresses of rising prices, lower home values and increasing job uncertainties left you feeling overwhelmed with nowhere to turn?

Your local energy utility understands and wants to assist you during these times.

If you're having trouble paying your gas or electric bill, call your local utility or log onto www.arizonaselfhelp.org for information about energy bill assistance programs.

These are stressful times. However, it's good to know, you're not alone.



LIRA Program Income Requirements

Maximum Household Income - Effective July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

Number of Persons Living in My Home	1	2	3	4	5
Total Combined Annual Income from ALL Sources	\$15,600	\$21,000	\$26,400	\$31,800	\$37,200

For each additional person, add \$5,400

Compare the number of persons in your household to your total annual household income to determine if you qualify.

Note: Total combined annual income from all sources **cannot** exceed the Income Requirements listed above.

Number of persons in my household: Total annual household income: \$

If you qualify based on the chart above, complete and return the entire application. I certify:

- I am a residential customer of Southwest Gas and the bill is in my name.
- Southwest Gas reserves the right to verify my household income and eligibility.
- I am not claimed on another person's income tax return.
- My household's total gross annual income meets the LIRA Program Income Requirements enclosed. Income sources include:
 - Wages or salaries
 - Interest and/or rental income
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Workers' compensation
 - Veteran Affairs benefits
 - Social Security, SSI
 - Food stamps or TANF (AFDC)
 - Disability payments
 - Cash Public Assistance
 - Other income
- I will renew my application every two years or when requested by Southwest Gas.
- Any connected service to a pool, spa, or hot tub has been prescribed, in writing, by a licensed physician.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Southwest Gas 13-digit Account Number

Name (as shown on Southwest Gas bill)

Home Address

City

State

Zip Code

Home Telephone

Work Telephone

I state that the information I have provided in this application is true and correct. I agree to provide proof of income or other information, if requested. I agree to inform Southwest Gas within 30 days if I no longer qualify to receive the discount. I understand that if I receive the discount without meeting the qualifications for it, I may be required to pay back any discount I received.

Customer Signature

Date

Seal with tape. Do not staple.

FOR SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION USE ONLY

Date Received

Date Effective

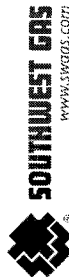
Date Verified

By

Application and Declaration of Eligibility for Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance (LIRA)

Get a discount on your gas bill!

- Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance (LIRA) provides a 20% reduction on the "base" monthly rate.
- This is applied to the first 150 therms of natural gas used each month from November 1 through April 30.
- Discounted monthly Basic Service Charge.



For more information, please call the telephone number below.

1-800-873-2440

Form 913.32 (05/2008) 320



Low-Income Energy Conservation (LIEC) Program

The LIEC weatherization program provides free audits, conservation education, and comprehensive weatherization materials that increase energy efficiency and safety in the homes of low-income customers. Emergency bill assistance is also available to income-qualified customers facing a financial hardship.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

You may also be eligible for energy bill assistance under LIHEAP, which is administered by the State of Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES). Eligibility requirements and additional information on the LIHEAP program can be obtained by calling DES at 1-800-582-5706. ADD customers use Arizona Relay Service.

¿Desea información en español?

El programa de asistencia a consumidores de bajos ingresos (LIRA son las siglas en inglés) de Southwest Gas proporciona una reducción del 20% de tarifas en las primeras 150 unidades térmicas (therms) de su factura mensual. El programa comienza el 1º de noviembre y continúa hasta el 30 de abril de cada año.

Para recibir un formulario en español o para más información, por favor llame al número de teléfono indicado abajo.

1-800-873-2440

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UNITED STATES

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 478 LAS VEGAS NV

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SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

ATTN LIRA

PO BOX 52075

PHOENIX AZ 85072-9980